Illinois Department of Transportation
2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

BDE PROCEDURE MEMORANDUM

NUMBER: 48-06

SUBJECT: Design Flexibility and the Stakeholder Involvement Process for Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)

DATE: March 1, 2006

This memorandum modifies the information in Sections 2-2, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4, 11-1.01(b), 19-3, 23-3, 24-2, 25-2 and 31-8.01 of the *BDE Manual*.

BACKGROUND

Public Act 093-0545, which became effective January 1, 2004, provides that the Illinois Department of Transportation "…shall embrace principles of context sensitive design and context sensitive solutions in its policies and procedures for the planning, design, construction, and operation of its projects for new construction, reconstruction, or major expansion of existing transportation facilities." This is to ensure that the Department's projects "…adequately meet the State's transportation needs, exist in harmony with their surroundings, and add lasting value to the communities they serve." Departmental Policy D&E 21, issued on August 1, 2005, formally codified Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) as the official policy of the Department for projects utilizing CSS principles.

The CSS principles that are the focus of the legislation, place renewed emphasis on the importance of an effective public involvement process for identifying the transportation and community concerns and values that need to be considered on each project. They also highlight the need for appropriate flexibility in the application of design criteria to accommodate the development of innovative solutions that effectively respond to the identified concerns and values. As an initial step in implementing context sensitive principles on State highway projects, this memorandum is intended to clarify the Department's position on the use of the flexibility that is inherent in the design criteria, and to incorporate provisions for development and implementation of an effective "Stakeholder Involvement Process" tailored to each project's circumstances for projects developed under the principles of CSS.

IDOT training on CSS is currently being developed. The training will include guidance on the use of design flexibility and the stakeholder involvement process for achieving effective Context Sensitive Solutions. Districts should become familiar with the information in this memorandum and should

begin implementing its provisions beginning with projects in the FY 2007-2012 Proposed Highway Improvement Program as soon as their Program Development managers have had the CSS training.

APPLICABILITY

The procedures in this memorandum are applicable to all State highway projects, as determined by the Regional Engineer.

PROCEDURES

Sections 2-2, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4 and 11-1.01(b) of the BDE Manual are revised to read as follows (margin lines denote the location of revisions):

2.2 PHASE I STUDIES

PROJECT ACTIVITY (Phase I)

Activity Title: Transfer/Assign to Project Study Group

Activity No.: 03

Responsible Unit: Studies and Plans Engineer

Activity Description:

At this point the project will be assigned to a project study group within the district Bureau of Program Development to begin the corridor study. The Studies and Plans Engineer will have the overall day-to-day responsibility for advancing the project through the Phase I study process. He/she, or his/her designee, will:

- coordinate directly with other units within the Department;
- attend all internal meetings and field inspections;
- ensure that the project study meets all Department criteria and procedures;
- report directly to the District Program Development Engineer on all significant project activities, problems, and developments; and
- participate in the public involvement process.

The number and expertise of personnel initially assigned to the project study group will vary with the nature and scope of the proposed improvement. The personnel assigned will also vary over time relative to the priority for completion, the available lead time, and the activity in project development under study.

If the project is one which the Regional Engineer has determined will use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), the public involvement process should commence at this point. The project study group shall use the Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) as outlined in Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) to conduct public involvement for CSS projects.

PROJECT ACTIVITY (Phase I)

Activity Title: Conduct Public Involvement Activities

Activity No.: 10

Responsible Unit: Project Study Group/Environmental Unit

Activity Description:

Once the reasonable corridors have been selected (Activity 09), the public should be provided an opportunity to become acquainted with the project and express its views. The public involvement program is first initiated by advising the public that a study is underway. As the project progresses, the district should offer opportunities for the public to receive updated information on the status of the project and provide input and comment. This will culminate in the corridor phase with Activity 14 “Conduct Corridor Public Hearing” when the public will be offered a formal opportunity to comment on the corridor alternatives under consideration. Public involvement should be an ongoing process as the project development evolves.

For projects which the Regional Engineer has determined will use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), the public involvement process should commence once the project is assigned to the project study group. The project study group shall use the Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) as outlined in Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) to conduct public involvement for CSS projects.

For more detailed information on public involvement activities, see Chapter 19.

PROJECT ACTIVITY (Phase I)

Activity Title: Initiate Public Involvement

Activity No.: 26

Responsible Unit: Project Study Group/Environmental Unit

Activity Description:

This Activity will allow the public an opportunity for input and comment on the alternatives selected in Activity 24. Typically, this will consist of informational letters, advertisements, and/or meetings with local government officials, fire districts, school districts, drainage districts, historic commissions, MPOs, residents, businesses, etc. These meetings or letters may include:

- advising local, State, and Federal officials that a project has been initiated;
- procedures for developing possible coordination and public service involvement;
- a discussion on the project scope;
- a request for information (e.g., MPO plans, drainage problems, transit needs);
- a discussion with businesses, railroads, and utility companies; and
- talking with individuals at public information meetings about individual concerns.

Public coordination must be continuous throughout the project development. For guidance on public coordination, see Chapter 19.

For projects which the Regional Engineer has determined will use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), the public involvement process should commence once the project is assigned to the project study group. The project study group shall use the Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) as outlined in Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) to conduct public involvement for CSS projects.

For more detailed information on public involvement activities, see Chapter 19.

3.2 PROJECTS WITH MAJOR RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITIONS

PROJECT ACTIVITY (Phase I)

Activity Title: Transfer/Assign to Project Study Group

Activity No.: 03

Responsible Unit: Studies and Plans Engineer

Activity Description:

At this point the project will either be assigned to a project study group within the district Bureau of Program Development to begin the design study. The Studies and Plans Engineer will have the overall day-to-day responsibility for advancing the project through the Phase I study process. He/she, or his/her designee, will:

- coordinate directly with other units within the Department;
- attend all internal meetings and field inspections;
- ensure that the project study meets all Department criteria and procedures;
- report directly to the District Program Development Engineer on all significant project activities, problems, and developments; and
- participate in the public involvement process.

The number and expertise of personnel initially assigned to the project study group will vary with the nature and scope of the proposed improvement. The personnel assigned will also vary over time relative to the priority for completion, the available lead time, and the activity in project development under study.

If the project is one which the Regional Engineer has determined will use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), the public involvement process should commence at this point. The project study group shall use the Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) as outlined in Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) to conduct public involvement for CSS projects.

PROJECT ACTIVITY (Phase I)

Activity Title: Initiate Public Involvement

Activity No.: 13

Responsible Unit: Project Study Group/Environmental Unit

Activity Description:

This Activity will allow the public an opportunity for input and comment on the alternatives selected in Activity 11. Typically, this will consist of informational letters, advertisements, and/or meetings with local government officials, fire districts, school districts, drainage districts, historic commissions, MPOs, residents, businesses, etc. These meetings or letters may include:

- advising local, State, and Federal officials that a project has been initiated and that a study is underway;
- procedures for developing possible coordination and public service involvement;
- a discussion on the project scope;
- a request for information (e.g., MPO plans, drainage problems, transit needs);
- a discussion with businesses, railroads, and utility companies; and
- talking with individuals at public information meetings about individual concerns.

For projects which the Regional Engineer has determined will use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), the public involvement process should commence once the project is assigned to the project study group. The project study group shall use the Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) as outlined in Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) to conduct public involvement for CSS projects.

Public coordination must be continuous throughout the project development. For guidance on public coordination, see Chapter 19.

3.4 PROJECTS WITH MINOR RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITIONS

PROJECT ACTIVITY (Phase I)

Activity Title: Transfer/Assign to Project Study Group

Activity No.: 03

Responsible Unit: Studies and Plans Engineer

Activity Description:

At this point the project will either be assigned to a project study group within the district Bureau of Program Development to begin the design study. The Studies and Plans Engineer will have the overall day-to-day responsibility for advancing the project through the Phase I study process. He/she, or his/her designee, will:

- coordinate directly with other units within the Department;
- attend all internal meetings and field inspections;
- ensure that the project study meets all Department criteria and procedures;
- report directly to the District Program Development Engineer on all significant project activities, problems, and developments; and
- participate in the public involvement process.

The number and expertise of personnel initially assigned to the project study group will vary with the nature and scope of the proposed improvement. The personnel assigned will also vary over time relative to the priority for completion, the available lead time, and the activity in project development under study.

If the project is one which the Regional Engineer has determined will use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), the public involvement process should commence at this point. The project study group shall use the Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) as outlined in Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) to conduct public involvement for CSS projects.

PROJECT ACTIVITY (Phase I)

Activity Title: Initiate Early Coordination/Public Involvement

Activity No.: 07

Responsible Unit: Project Study Group

Activity Description:

Coordination with other Department and governmental agencies, as appropriate, is an important aspect during the design study process. This coordination should begin as early as practical in project planning.

At this stage of the design study process, the project study group will initiate early coordination with other Department Units or Bureaus and governmental agencies (e.g., Environmental, FHWA, Land Acquisition, Construction, Operations, Bridges and Structures, Utilities) that have an interest in the project or have information or expertise concerning any issues the project may involve. The purpose of this coordination will be to assist in the identification of reasonable design alternatives and in gathering information to evaluate the social, economic, engineering, and environmental impacts of the proposed project and possible impact mitigation measures. This coordination should begin as early as practical. Early coordination will also identify the cooperating agencies.

Also, this Activity will allow the public an opportunity for input and comment on the project. Typically, this will consist of informational letters, advertisements, and/or meetings with local government officials, fire districts, school districts, drainage districts, historic commissions, MPOs, residents, businesses, etc. These meetings or letters may include:

- advising local, State, and Federal officials that a project has been initiated and that a study is underway;
- procedures for developing possible coordination and public service involvement;
- a discussion on the project scope;
- a request for information (e.g., MPO plans, drainage problems, transit needs);
- a discussion with businesses, railroads, and utility companies; and
- talking with individuals at public information meetings about individual concerns.

For projects which the Regional Engineer has determined will use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), the public involvement process should commence once the project is assigned to the project study group. The project study group shall use the Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) as outlined in Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) to conduct public involvement for CSS projects.

Public coordination must be ongoing throughout the project development. For guidance on public involvement, see Chapter 19.

3.4 PROJECTS WITH NO RIGHT-OF-WAY ACQUISITIONS

PROJECT ACTIVITY (Phase I)

Activity Title: Transfer/Assign to Project Study Group/Design Squad

Activity No.: 03

Responsible Unit: Studies and Plans Engineer

Activity Description:

At this point the project will either be assigned to a project study group/design squad within the district Bureau of Program Development to begin the design study. Because of the length and type of activity for these projects, typically the same unit which conducts the Phase I study will also perform the Phase II design. The Studies and Plans Engineer will have the overall day-to-day responsibility for advancing the project through plan submittal. He/she, or his/her designee, will:

- coordinate directly with other units within the Department;
- attend all internal meetings and field inspections;
- ensure that the project study meets all Department criteria and procedures;
- report directly to the District Program Development Engineer on all significant project activities, problems, and developments; and
- participate in the public involvement process.

The number and expertise of personnel initially assigned to the project will vary with the nature and scope of the proposed improvement. The personnel assigned will also vary over time relative to the priority for completion, the available lead time, and the activity in project development under study.

If the project is one which the Regional Engineer has determined will use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), the public involvement process should commence at this point. The project study group shall use the Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) as outlined in Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) to conduct public involvement for CSS projects.

11-1.01(b) Purpose

Phase I studies are developed to ensure that, as practical, highway locations and proposed designs are consistent with Federal, State, and local goals and objectives. Consider the following when performing a Phase I study:

1. Design Uniformity. When conducting Phase I studies, ensure that proposed improvements will satisfy a need, are designed and constructed according to IDOT policies and criteria, and that uniform designs are used Statewide. Designers must seek, however, to use all of the flexibility inherent in the policies included herein to craft the best possible solutions to identified transportation problems.

2. Public Involvement. Develop the final design in conformance with the public involvement requirements of Chapter 19.

3. Public Interest Considerations. Make final project decisions in the best overall public interest. A Phase I study should fully consider the need for safe and efficient transportation, public services, and the costs of eliminating or minimizing adverse impacts to the social and natural environment.

4. Adverse Effects of Project. Ensure that the potential adverse economic, social, and environmental effects of any proposed action have been fully considered. See Part III, Environmental Procedures.

Section 19-3 of the BDE Manual is revised as indicated in the following paragraphs. Margin lines denote the location of additions or changes to language currently in the manual. Note: Four new figures are incorporated in Section 19-3.01 as a part of these revisions. For purposes of this Procedure Memorandum, the figures are included as attachments. When the revisions are incorporated in the BDE Manual, the new figures will be placed in the appropriate locations in the text and the identification numbers for the other figures in Section 19-3 (and the references to those figures) will be revised accordingly.

19-3.01(a) The Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) For Use With Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)

Once a project has been scoped and included in the Department's Proposed Highway Improvement Program, the Regional Engineer will determine if it is to be developed using the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). This decision should be based on the preliminary scope of the project and if it falls under the types of projects Public Act 093-0545 specifies for the use of CSS – "new construction, reconstruction, or major expansion of existing transportation facilities". All CSS projects must use the SIP for public involvement. At the discretion of the Regional Engineer, the SIP format and

the CSS approach may also be used for other state highway improvement projects besides those meeting the criteria for required use of CSS in Public Act 093-0545.

The SIP is a process that will facilitate effective identification and understanding of the concerns and values of all stakeholders (i.e., persons and entities that have a stake in the outcome of a highway project, see Figure 19-3C) as an integral part of the project development process. It includes a formal written plan explaining how public input and comments will be obtained. Formal hearings may be included as a component of the involvement process as necessary and appropriate for particular projects.

The purpose of the SIP is to promote a proactive and responsive CSS approach that proactively seeks the input of the full range of concerned stakeholders early and often and that provides for appropriate consideration of stakeholder input at key points in the project decision-making process (e.g., decisions on project purpose, range of alternatives, and selection of a preferred alternative).

Involvement and coordination activities associated with the environmental process should be viewed as an integral part of the stakeholder involvement process. The timing of the stakeholder involvement process activities should accommodate and coordinate with the key milestones in the environmental process and, as applicable, the concurrence points for the NEPA/404 merger process (described in Section 22-4). For projects subject to the NEPA/404 merger process, consideration of the outcomes of the concurrence point meetings with the environmental regulatory and resource agencies should be a part of the iterative processes for achieving stakeholder consensus on project purpose and need, range of alternatives, and the preferred alternative.

The SIP is flexible and modular, and should be designed to fit the size and complexity of each project. The SIP model (see Figure 19-3B) includes the complementary concepts of “omission points” and “halting points”. The “omission points” show where and why certain activities may be omitted from the SIP for a particular project. The “halting points” show under what conditions certain activities, if undertaken, can be considered completed. Decisions made for each of these points may be found in a particular SIP, where certain activities are excluded as being unnecessary while others are continued until a result is reached. Project study groups should tailor the SIP to meet the needs of a particular project and its stakeholders.

<u>Step 1: Stakeholder Identification and Development of the SIP</u>

Once a project is designated for CSS, the district should begin the SIP. First, a project study group should be formed. The project study group is the multidisciplinary team which will develop the project. In addition to appropriate district and consultant staff, the group may include representatives from other offices/entities, including, but not limited to, the following:

- FHWA
- Office of Planning and Programming
- Bureau of Design and Environment
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations

If the project is likely to involve bicycle and pedestrian issues, the district's bicycle and pedestrian coordinator also should be a part of the project study group.

Once the preliminary engineering study is started, other disciplines can be added to the project study group, or consulted as necessary to respond to issues involved with the project and to promote identification and evaluation of the full range of possible project options. The disciplines to be included or consulted should be determined early in the process and should be reflected in the SIP.

The project study group should research correspondence and other information leading to the initiation of the project and start making a list of stakeholders (individuals, organizations, agencies, etc. that are on record as supporting or opposing a proposed improvement to address the transportation issue). This initial stakeholder list should expand as the preliminary engineering study proceeds, and can grow into a contacts list for specific issues or projects – see Section 19-4.02.

Each district should maintain such a contacts list of concerned citizens, public officials, organizations, agencies and others who want to be involved or informed on transportation issues in their areas. The district should determine from this list the possible stakeholders that may desire to be involved in helping the Department proceed with a preliminary engineering study on the transportation issue and should add those names to the list of stakeholders for the project. The stakeholder list will be expanded as information is gathered from contacts or meetings with local officials, chambers of commerce, planning commissions, affected property owners, environmental resource agencies, the motoring public, special interest groups, etc.

Unless previous records or contact lists already exist, the best way to identify many of the stakeholders for a particular project is to meet with the elected officials and agency representatives for the project area. The project study group can ask these officials and representatives about the groups and types of people likely to be interested and/or affected and can also ask them to identify any organizations through which these stakeholders can be contacted. For larger and more complex projects, it is suggested that other sources of stakeholder information such as neighborhood and business organizations, environmental and preservation interest groups and transportation and growth management groups also be consulted to supplement the information received from elected officials and agency representatives.

Figure 19-3C lists various types of stakeholders. Not all of these types will necessarily be affected on any specific project and a particular group of stakeholders may belong in more than one category. This listing is intended to aid the project study group in formulating potential stakeholder contact lists. It is not meant to be an exhaustive checklist that must be followed in strict order.

Although State and Federal Resource Agencies may be identified as stakeholders on any project, if it is known that the project will be subject to the NEPA/404 Merger Process (see Section 22-4) the Resource Agencies shall be considered stakeholders and involved in the process early on.

After a preliminary list of stakeholders is compiled, the project study group also shall develop an Stakeholder Involvement Plan that identifies who the stakeholders are, how they are going to be reached, and a tentative schedule of meetings. This plan need not be extremely detailed, and can be modified as the process develops. The plan also need not be time or date driven, but rather could be linked to milestones or decision points that occur throughout the course of a study. The SIP should also contain the tentative ground rules under which it will be conducted. An example SIP (See Figure 19-3D) is included for reference.

Step 2: Developing Project Problem Statement

The first general contact with stakeholders is meant to introduce the transportation issues to be resolved to the public, exchange information, and identify issues. This contact starts the process of coordinating with the public so they can begin to understand that their involvement is vital to the development of the project.

The contact should commence with a large initial informational meeting of the project study group with the stakeholders to explain the ground rules under which the SIP will be conducted. What is the code of conduct for the group? What are the purpose and goals of the process? What will be the method of decision making? What are the accountabilities of the participants? How is consensus defined? How will transparency of the process be assured? All these questions must be addressed by explicit ground rules, and agreed upon by the stakeholders.

Once SIP ground rules are established and accepted by the stakeholders, the project study group should present its vision of the transportation problem or problems to be solved and the preliminary proposed solutions resulting from the scoping process. It is also helpful at that time to explain departmental procedures for choosing and developing projects to stakeholders.

> **Halting Point:** This activity is finished when the stakeholders understand and agree with the SIP ground rules and understand the department's preliminary definition of the transportation problems and solutions for the project.

Next, the project study group should undertake an effort to complete a context audit for the project in concert with the stakeholders. These audits are intended to help identify various characteristics which define the context of each project. This will aid in defining the project purpose, or the transportation problem to be addressed. The audit is designed to consider not only the area's history and heritage, but environmental conditions, as well as community goals. A sample Context Audit Form (See Figure 19-3E) is attached.

Context audit meetings can be large and include all stakeholders or can be conducted as multiple smaller meetings if the project is large in scale and affects a great many stakeholders of varied interests or affects many communities. It is often helpful to conduct these smaller meetings with groups of stakeholders that have common interests based, for example, on geography or specific issues. The smaller meetings should be informal in nature, designed to learn about each group's issues. At the end of a multi-meeting process, it is recommended that a full public meeting be held to compile and complete the overarching context audit for the project.

This audit process should be simple and should deal with broad, problem-defining issues. Staffing at the meetings should be adequate for stakeholders to have their questions answered in a timely fashion. For larger projects, public affairs consultants may be involved in this type of outreach instead of, or in addition to, Department staff.

After the context audit is completed, the project study group should meet with the stakeholders to develop a clear statement of the transportation problem(s) to be solved by the project. This can occur at a context audit meeting, or may require a meeting or meetings subsequent to the context audit meeting on projects with a more complex context. The project study group should seek input on current transportation problems in the area the stakeholders believe need to be solved, and how the project as preliminarily proposed might help alleviate them. If stakeholder solutions are suggested that are technically or financially infeasible, the project study group should determine what the underlying problems the suggestions were attempting to solve, and whether or not there is a feasible way to address them within the project's anticipated scope?

This input should be translated into a clear statement of the transportation problems which should be, and can be, solved by the project. The project study group should ensure the stakeholders understand that this statement is of perceived transportation problems, not of the preferred project scope of work. Care must be taken to make the statement realistic within the limits imposed by engineering considerations, available funding and the logical termini (see Section 11-3.02) of the project. Once a clear problem statement is completed, it must be accepted by consensus of the stakeholders.

The project study group needs to assure that the stakeholders understand that these issues will be revisited on projects during formal development of

Purpose & Need under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, if applicable. Further, Federal and State Resource Agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must also concur in the Purpose & Need for projects subject to the NEPA/404 Merger process.

Omission Point: The problem statement meeting can be omitted from the project's Stakeholder Involvement Plan if this kind of analysis (or a Purpose and Need statement, as part of the NEPA process) has already been conducted. This can happen when, for example, a Purpose and Need statement was issued as part of a corridor study prior to the project being added to the transportation program. However, the project study group should undertake some initial, informal investigation and outreach to determine if the facts and conditions behind the Purpose and Need are still operative; if, for example, it has been many years since the Purpose and Need activities were conducted, or if a new issue has come up, more work might be warranted. It may be prudent to hold a meeting to verify that stakeholders agree with the previously developed purpose and need. Another example of when Purpose and Need should be revisited would be when the project is subject to the NEPA/404 Merger Process, which requires Resource Agency concurrence in the Purpose and Need. It would be prudent to hold a meeting to verify that all stakeholders agree with the revised Purpose and Need.

Halting Point: This Step is finished when an understanding as to the purpose of the project is arrived at by both the Department and the stakeholders. If the project is subject to the NEPA/404 Merger Process, this will include concurrence on the Purpose and Need from the Resource Agencies. It can also be concluded if the general consensus is for not proceeding with the project.

Developing the project purpose is the first, fundamental step in the overall project development process. Central to this concept is the understanding by all stakeholders that a transportation problem has been identified, and the Department is committing resources to address that problem. At the onset, outreach should be focused on understanding community viewpoints on the nature of transportation issues associated with the identified problem. Outreach should also focus on finding out the specific values associated with the local context.

The point of this outreach is to assure congruence between the Department's assessment of the problem(s) to be addressed and those recognized by the community. If these views are different, it can become very difficult for stakeholders to agree to make trade-offs during the planning and design process. The absence of general endorsement of the problem's definition at this point is a strong indication that the process is not ready to proceed to the next step. A clear understanding between stakeholders and the Department regarding a transportation need, including what transportation issues and

problems are to be addressed, is needed for progress toward solving the transportation problem.

Step 3: Defining Alternatives

The intent of this Step is to develop project alternatives or options and to ask for input into the development process for the preliminary study alternatives. The purpose and need for the project that was developed in Step 2 is the driving force for the identification of the alternatives or options and concerns identified from Step 2 also should be considered during this process.

On larger and more complex projects such as new construction and major reconstruction, this is usually the appropriate time to form one or more "technical advisory groups" (TAG's). These groups are composed of stakeholders who volunteer to be in ongoing contact with the project study group, over and above the full public meetings that take place, and will work on analyzing alternatives generated. For larger and more complex projects, several groups could be created and could each be responsible for analyzing the alternatives according to a particular subject matter (e.g., economic development, aesthetics, etc.). For smaller and less complex projects, a single group that handles all relevant subjects could be convened instead.

> **Omission Point:** For smaller and/or less complex projects on which the number of stakeholders or the likely number of meetings is small, the formation of TAG's can be omitted.

On larger and more complex projects, consultant staff may assume these responsibilities, overseen by the project study group.

Staff should approach stakeholder suggestions from the standpoint of determining what problems and issues are being addressed. If suggested proposals are either technically or financially infeasible (or both), explain this plainly and respectfully. Staff should work with stakeholders to determine the underlying issues and should try to identify alternative solutions that would address the concerns within the engineering and budgetary constraints. Input obtained from these meetings generally will result in revisions to the alternatives being considered at this time. Ideally, the range of alternatives retained for further study will be narrowed at this point in the process, based on the comments received, the results of preliminary surveys, and the design analyses conducted to date.

> **Halting Point:** Once several alternatives have been developed and all issues that are reasonably related to the project have been identified, the process can move on to the alternative elimination stage.
>
> **Omission Point:** The process can proceed directly to alternative elimination if, at the initial meeting(s), stakeholders did not identify any significant differences or issues omitted from previously developed alternatives.

For all but the smallest or least complex projects, several meetings for analyzing alternatives are likely to be necessary. The purpose of follow-up "alternative analysis" meetings is to present the refined alternatives generated from the first round of meetings and to begin to reduce the number of alternatives carried forward. Concerns from previous meetings, along with any current conflict resolution results, are discussed. If concerns cannot be incorporated, staff must indicate why and attempt to offer solutions that address the issues underlying these concerns.

Technical advisory groups, if formed, would continue their analysis and help make the presentation at the full meeting(s). In fact, subsequent alternative analysis meetings are best conducted with the technical advisory groups themselves, since this saves time, space, and budget and is consistent with the purpose for which the technical advisory groups were created. Generally, full public meetings during this stage should only happen if a new issue emerges, or an issue not previously considered relevant becomes important.

For large or complex projects, there may be a need for several rounds of meetings for refining and reducing the number of alternatives, whereas, if the project is simple, elimination of alternatives can occur in one meeting. On larger projects, consultant staff can assume these responsibilities, under the supervision of the project study group.

> **Halting Point:** Meetings are reiterated until a preferred alternative is reached. If the preferred alternative is chosen outside of the NEPA process, it will be revisited under NEPA, if applicable. Further, State and Federal Resource Agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must concur in the alternatives to be carried forward for further analysis, as well as the preferred alternative on projects subject to the NEPA/404 Merger process.

Step 4: Approval of Final Alternative

This is the last stakeholder involvement activity during initial design and its intent is to finalize the consensus with the public. In order to have reached this point, all reasonable concerns should have been addressed and all serious conflicts resolved, and the preferred alternative should reflect that.

The purpose of this activity is to formalize the agreed-upon consensus for project scope. The watchwords should be "no outstanding issues" and "no surprises." Staff should carefully determine whether issues remain unresolved or unidentified. If so, more rounds of alternative definition, analysis, and selection should be conducted before a public hearing.

A good goal to work toward throughout the entire SIP is the creation of a consensus document outlining (1) the purpose of the project, (2) project scope, and (3) design elements that each stakeholder group and the

Department feel comfortable approving at this end-point. If staff does not feel that the process has reached such a point, outstanding issues should be dealt with before scheduling this final meeting. Again, if the preferred alternative is chosen outside of the NEPA process, it will be revisited under NEPA, if applicable. Also, Resource Agencies such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers must concur in the preferred alternative on projects subject to the NEPA/404 Merger process.

Documentation of the SIP for CSS Projects

A critical element to the success of the CSS SIP is documentation. The project study group should clearly note and explain all major decisions made during the SIP. This includes all choices made from the selection of stakeholders, the definition of SIP ground rules, other parameters of the SIP such as type and frequency of meetings, the selection of alternatives to be studied and the selection of the final alternative. Any exceptions to established departmental design criteria must be clearly and completely justified. Any design features requiring special treatment during Phase II, construction or maintenance during the project's design life should be noted and passed on to the entities responsible for those. This documentation should be included in the project file for future reference.

Stakeholder Involvement Subsequent to Phase I Project Development on CSS Projects

There may be instances in which changes to design features are proposed subsequent to Phase I Engineering and the SIP as outlined above. The changes can occur during Phase II Project Development, construction or operation of the project. In the case where the change represents a major departure from the design resulting from the SIP, the project study group is required to meet again with the stakeholders to discuss and obtain consensus on the changes to be made. Any original design features, as well as any other commitments made during Phase I, will be contained in the project's commitment file (see Section 4-2.07).

There may also be occasions where the project study group will be required to approach the stakeholders on new issues which arise during Phase II Engineering, construction or operation of the project. The issues will generally relate to decisions including, but not limited to, architectural design features, landscaping, aesthetics, management of traffic, maintenance of access or public health. Stakeholder consensus must obtained on such issues before any such feature is included in the project.

19-3.01(b) Implementing the Stakeholder Involvement Process for CSS Projects

The activities outlined above should lead to greater integration of stakeholder ideas and opinions into project development. These activities should be aimed at providing stakeholders, most of whom are not going to be transportation or engineering professionals, with a good understanding of the issues, limitations, and purpose of the project being considered. Districts should not feel that the process outlined above is a rigid checklist of activities that must be followed to the letter; rather, they should use their judgment in applying the steps in the framework to determine how best to contact and engage stakeholders.

The following are additional considerations that can guide the planning of a constructive SIP.

Choosing An Approach

For most of the stakeholder involvement activities detailed above, the "open house" format of meeting is generally considered to be the most conducive towards public understanding and input. However, specific involvement activities may utilize a number of other formats in providing information to and receiving input from stakeholders.

There are many types of meetings and activities that can be used to either help plan for or follow-up a large-scale stakeholder meeting. It is important to reach a wide variety of stakeholders during the planning and design process and to create an atmosphere that encourages the free and open exchange of information. Following are brief descriptions of several stakeholder involvement techniques that can be used to achieve this end. (Section 19-3.02 provides further details on several of these techniques.)

- **Group briefings** are informal meetings with stakeholders. They can be very effective for circulating information on various issues and gaining valuable input.
- **Open houses** are held in the immediate area of the project and provide an informal setting for the public to meet and interact with Department representatives on project issues in a format that offers considerable flexibility for interested persons to attend when it fits their schedule.
- **Workshops** are meetings where participants are given basic transportation requirements and various constraints related to a problem, and are then asked to study the problem and suggest a solution. In a workshop format, participants are requested to analyze the provided information, identify impacts that may have been overlooked, work with other participants, and offer solutions and explanations of their suggestions.

- **Informational meetings** are informal public gatherings that blend the opportunity for individual discussions, as occurs at open houses, with more structured group interaction through project presentations and question and answer sessions.
- **Advisory committees** identify key stakeholders and organize them into a community resource council as an advisory group to the study team. They provide input and response and serve to focus the views, concerns, and values of the communities.
- **Technical advisory groups** are a specific and structured form of advisory committee. They are assembled to review specific planning and design materials and advise the study team at key milestones, before the information is finalized.
- **Elected officials meetings** basically serve to brief the elected officials on the issues at hand and solicit input from them. Elected officials represent a variety of constituents and, therefore, provide a unique perspective into the issues or problems being discussed.
- **Interest group meetings** target a wide variety of groups, such as service clubs, city councils, county boards, chambers of commerce, homeowners associations, local and regional planning agencies, farm bureaus, state officials, environmental organizations, and minority organizations. Each of these groups provides a unique perspective into the issues being discussed, such as access, loss of property, job creation, impacts to environmental resources, and economic development.
- **Focus groups** are a tool to gauge public opinion. They provide for small group discussion with professional leadership that is intended to solicit sample opinions on a single topic involving a few specific questions. The emphasis is on gathering perspectives, insights, and opinions of participants through conversation and interaction.
- **Public Opinion Surveys** can also be used to scientifically gauge public opinion once the focus groups have identified the major issues and a range of opinions and solutions to transportation issues has been solicited.
- **Charrettes** are meetings to resolve a specific problem or an issue. Within a specified time limit, participants work together intensely to reach resolution. A leader is used to bring out all points of view from the various stakeholders and participants.
- **Speakers (or listeners) bureaus** are groups of specially trained representatives who can speak about a process or a program. They can be community people or Department staff. They meet with public and private organizations and provide information, listen to concerns, answer questions, and seek continued participation and input.
- **Newsletters** can be issued regularly throughout the project development process to announce new developments, upcoming public involvement opportunities, and the results of involvement activities.

- **Information hotlines and websites** can be used to provide a way for interested citizens to gain information from the study team, get questions answered, and provide input and feedback.

It must be made clear that none of the above activities are intended to immediately produce final decisions. Rather, they will provide a forum for discussion and comment on various project-related issues to assist the Department and other decision-makers. Final decisions will be made during the final acceptance hearing (Step 4). Throughout the process, stakeholder mailing lists should be maintained to include all citizens who have had a contact with the study team, whether by attending a meeting, calling in, leaving a comment on-line, or sending in a letter.

Follow-Up

For the meeting activities described in the preceding section, prompt and open follow-up on issues raised during these meetings is necessary. The appropriate type of follow-up will partially depend on public or stakeholder attitudes at the public involvement activity. If the public has been generally supportive of the material presented at the meeting, it is probably not necessary to initiate a large-scale follow-up; it may suffice to write individual letters to those who asked questions which were not answered and to release information to the news media, via project newsletters, or through updates on the project website for any changes that were made as a result of stakeholder input.

A greater amount of follow-up is required when a particular meeting has not resolved the issues to a reasonable degree. If there was opposition or a lack of understanding regarding what the Department is trying to accomplish with the project, a more extensive follow-up program is appropriate. In this case, additional follow-up stakeholders meetings are an effective means of achieving better stakeholder understanding of issues at hand. These meetings can range from large-scale community briefings to one-on-one discussions with a particular stakeholder.

Working Towards Stakeholder Understanding

"Project purpose" discussions involving the community should focus on providing the community with background on known traffic safety problems or congestion/operational problems, traffic forecasts, and their anticipated effect on future traffic conditions. These help explain the Department's perspective on problems and needs, and set the stage for discussions about potential solutions. District staff should take advantage of any and all methods and opportunities to interact with the local citizens, public officials, and any other identified stakeholders. Efforts should focus on gathering data, developing a rapport and good working relationship with the local community, and obtaining a sense of what solutions to the identified transportation needs are in the context of the involved community.

Consensus Building Efforts

It should be noted that more than one of the meeting types listed above may need to be used and may require repetition, depending on (1) the number of stakeholders or stakeholder groups involved, (2) the scope of the problems and issues discussed, and (3) the positions and views of the stakeholders on the various issues. Keep in mind the "halting points" outlined in the SIP flowchart (Figure 19-3B); if a consensus resolution of these issues has not been achieved, then further meetings are probably necessary. Department staff involved in project development may find this frustrating or time-consuming, and many elected officials may feel this at an even stronger level. However, problems and issues raised by stakeholders do not go away if left unaddressed. Often relatively minor problems can become major impediments to progress if ignored or left unattended.

Throughout the SIP, project development staff should seek out activists and other participants with differing viewpoints from the team members, and engage in good faith discussions with them. An important component of conflict resolution is full disclosure of all information and discussions needed to manage and resolve conflicting values of stakeholders. When parties disagree, it is sometimes due to a misunderstanding or lack of information. It is important that both sides disclose relevant information to resolve or at least manage conflict between competing values.

An essential component of the Stakeholder Involvement Process is the concept of "consensus". The most serviceable definition of consensus is when a majority of the stakeholders agree on a particular issue, while the dissenting remainder of stakeholders agrees its input has been heard and duly considered and that the process as a whole was fair. The Stakeholder Involvement Process seeks consensus on all decisions driving the project development process, and allows for multiple iterations of each step in order to achieve it. However, there may be occasions on which consensus on one or more issues is impossible. Further, there may be occasions on which the consensus decision of stakeholders is infeasible on the grounds on engineering, environmental, funding, operational, safety or other grounds.

Ultimately, the Department is responsible for project development decisions on state highway improvement projects. If consensus is impossible or infeasible, the project study group must take the issue back to the Regional Engineer to determine how to proceed with the project.

Stakeholder Understanding of the Alternative Solutions

The Context Sensitive Solutions approach can vary as to how the Department handles this step. In one approach, the district can develop a range of alternatives that meet identified needs and that consider identified concerns. These alternatives are then reviewed in a public outreach process. New alternatives or variations on the original alternatives can be suggested by the stakeholders and should be analyzed and addressed by the district.

In a different approach, alternatives can be developed during the various stakeholder meetings and activities. Alternatives developed in this manner are refined and analyzed by district staff and presented broadly for public review and comment. This approach often fits best in situations involving a new facility, a significant change in the nature of a facility, or where a variety of configurations are possible for the project.

The project study group should consider the issues involved, along with the time and resources available, in order to make a choice about the proper approach to take.

Stakeholders can be involved in the screening and evaluation of alternatives in many ways. The results of the district's analyses can be shared broadly with the stakeholders for review and comment. Stakeholders can also be involved in conducting screening and evaluation. For example, stakeholders can be asked to conduct an exercise where they rate project criteria and then weigh alternatives. Technological tools are available for conducting this kind of interactive analysis. Using such tools can give both the project study group and the stakeholders a much clearer view of everyone's preferences.

A major problem in soliciting stakeholder input as it pertains to technical issues is how to convey a large amount of technical data to the public in a manner and language that they can understand, and in a relatively short time. The majority of citizens involved in these processes do not have the time to become conversant in the technical language and engineering concepts that are typically used by team personnel in studies of particular issues. Visualization aids – especially newer computer-assisted visual renderings – can significantly improve public understanding, enabling stakeholders to quickly analyze the information being presented. As a result, the use of effective visualization techniques can be a major asset to the successful implementation of public involvement activities.

Stakeholder Understanding of the Recommendation

If honest and open communication with stakeholders has occurred during the alternatives analysis stage, stakeholder understanding of the benefits and impacts of various transportation solutions should clear the way to a consensus option. Results of effective stakeholder involvement may include agreement that further study is needed, support for a solution or approach, revision of design right-of-way or construction details, or even the delay, postponement, or cancellation of the project. A true measure of the success of a SIP, regardless of the solution implemented, is the degree to which the community at large, and each stakeholder, can feel a sense of involvement and even ownership of the recommended solution.

Subsection 19-3.01(a) through 19-3.01(c) currently in the BDE Manual 2002 are re-designated as 19-3.01(c) through 19-3.01(d), respectively. The only changes to the remaining subsections in Section 19-3 consist of the following:

19-3.02(b) Group Briefings

The list of example groups on page 19-3(9) is revised as follows:

- service clubs (Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.);
- city councils;
- County Boards;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- homeowners associations;
- League of Women Voters;
- local and regional planning agencies;
- State officials in whose district the project is located;
- environmental organizations;
- minority organizations;
- organizations representing people with disabilities;
- non-motorized users.

19-3.02(i) Non-Meeting Activities

Item 8 on page 19-3(25) is revised to read as follows:

8. Internet Sites. Districts may wish to include project-related announcements on the IDOT Internet Site or may want to consider developing dedicated websites to publicize information for specific projects. Procedures for including district information on the IDOT website are available at http://idotweb/resources.asp.

Sections 23-3, 24-2, 25-2, and 31-8.01 of the BDE Manual are revised to read as follows (margin lines denote the location of revisions):

23-3 THE CE PROCESS

Categorical Exclusion Process

Activity Title: Initiate Early Coordination

Activity No.: 03

Responsible Unit: District Office/BDE

Activity Description:

Coordination with governmental agencies and the public, as appropriate, is one of the most important aspects of the CE process. This coordination should begin as early as practical in project planning.

As necessary, the district and BDE will initiate early coordination with organizations and persons and appropriate local, State, and Federal agencies that have an interest in the project or have information or expertise concerning environmental issues the project may involve. The purpose of this coordination will be to assist in the evaluation of alternatives and the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed project and possible impact mitigation measures. One specific objective of this early coordination is to gather information from other entities which may assist in the effort to compile an inventory of the affected environment (Activity 02). This may be necessary to identify historic/archaeological sites (SHPO), natural resources (IDNR), land-use activities (local governments), etc. Where written notification is considered appropriate, see Figure 23-3C for a sample letter.

For projects which the Regional Engineer has determined will use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), the public involvement process should commence once the project is assigned to the project study group. The project study group shall use the Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) as outlined in Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) to conduct public involvement for CSS projects.

If applicable, the district office should begin developing the public involvement plan for the project at this stage (see Chapter 19).

References:

- 40 CFR 1500.1(b) *Environmental Information for Decision Making*
- 40 CFR 1500.2(d) *Public Involvement*
- 40 CFR 1500.5(b) *Interagency Cooperation*
- 40 CFR 1501.1(b) *Interagency Cooperation*
- 40 CFR 1501.6 *Cooperating Agencies*
- 23 CFR 771.111 *Early Coordination and Public Involvement*
- 23 CFR 771.119(b) *Early Coordination/Scoping*
- Question 9. of CEQ Q&A *Approvals from Other Agencies*
- Section 22-5 *Coordination*
- Chapter 19 *Public Involvement Guidelines*

24-2 THE EA PROCESS

EA Process

Activity Title: Implement Public Involvement Process

Activity No.: 14

Responsible Unit: District Office

Activity Description:

Public involvement is a critical element of the EA process. Chapter 19 and the cited references discuss the requirements for public hearings, public information meetings, and input.

For projects which the Regional Engineer has determined will use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), the public involvement process should commence once the project is assigned to the project study group. The project study group shall use the Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) as outlined in Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) to conduct public involvement for CSS projects.

References:

- 40 CFR 1500.2(d) *Policy Encouraging Public Involvement*
- 40 CFR 1506.6 *Public Involvement Requirements*
- 23 CFR 771.111(h) *Public Involvement Requirements*
- 23 CFR 771.119(e) *Public Hearing Held*
- 23 CFR 771.119(f) *Public Hearing Not Held*
- Question 38. of CEQ Q&A *Public Availability of EA*
- Chapter 19 *Public Involvement Guidelines*

25-2 THE EIS PROCESS

EIS Process

Activity Title: Initiate Early Coordination

Activity No.: 06

Responsible Unit: District Office/BDE

Activity Description:

Coordination with governmental agencies and the public, as appropriate, is one of the most important aspects of the EIS process. This coordination should begin as early as practical in project planning.

The district and BDE will initiate early coordination with organizations and persons and appropriate local, State, and Federal agencies that have an interest in the project or have information or expertise concerning environmental issues the project may involve. The purpose of this coordination will be to assist in the identification of reasonable alternatives and in the gathering of information for evaluating the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed project and possible impact mitigation measures. See Figure 25-2D for a sample letter.

The district office should begin developing the public involvement plan for the project at this stage (see Chapter 19).

For projects which the Regional Engineer has determined will use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS), the public involvement process should commence once the project is assigned to the project study group. The project study group shall use the Stakeholder Involvement Process (SIP) as outlined in Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) to conduct public involvement for CSS projects.

References:

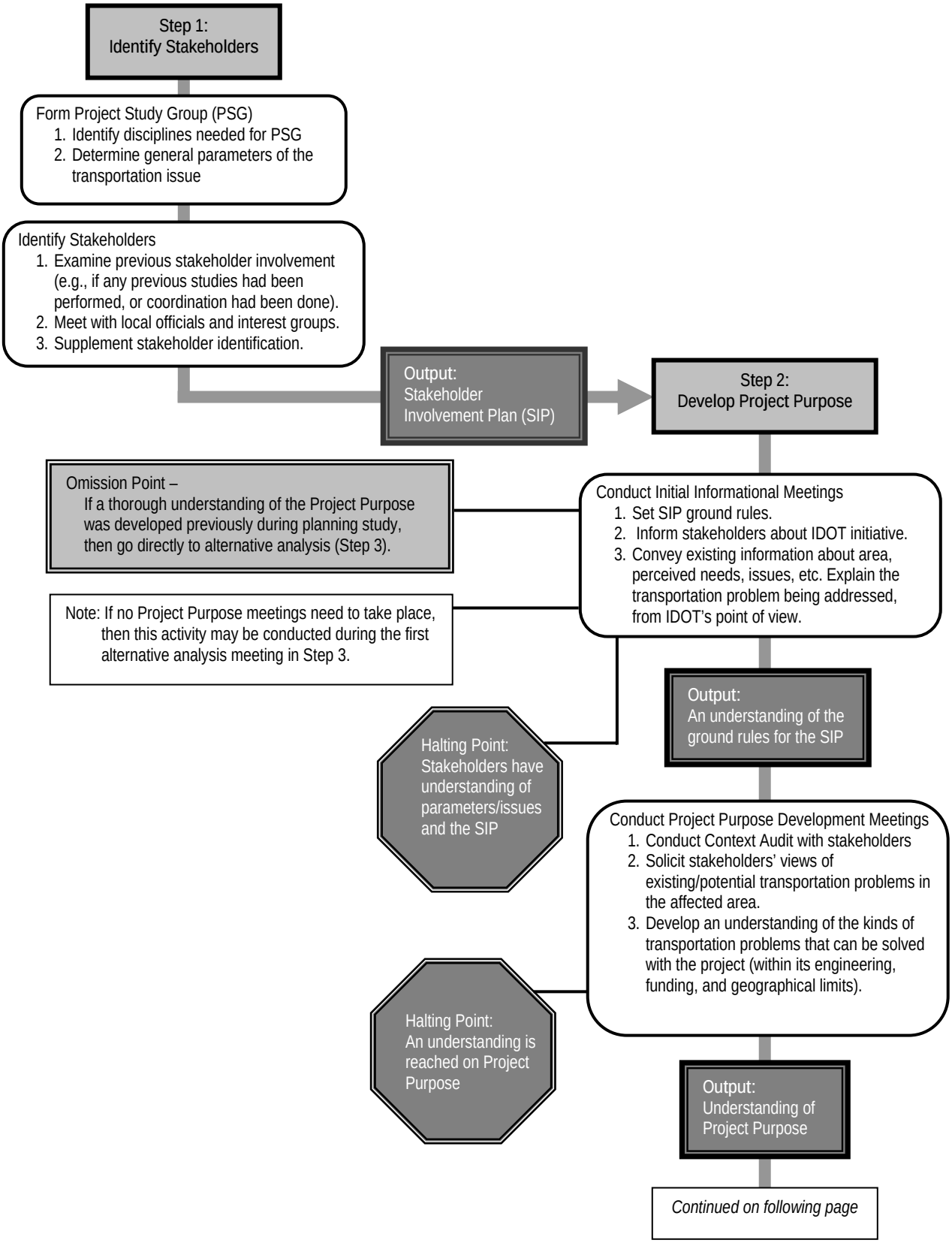
- 40 CFR 1500.1(b) *Environmental Information for Decision Making*
- 40 CFR 1500.2(d) *Public Involvement*
- 40 CFR 1500.5(b) *Interagency Cooperation*
- 40 CFR 1501.1(b) *Early Coordination*
- 40 CFR 1501.6 *Cooperating Agencies*
- 23 CFR 771.111 *Early Coordination and Public Involvement*
- Question 9. of CEQ Q&A *Needed Approval from Other Agencies*
- Section 22-5 *Coordination*
- Chapter 19 *Public Involvement Guidelines*

31-8.01 Department Intent

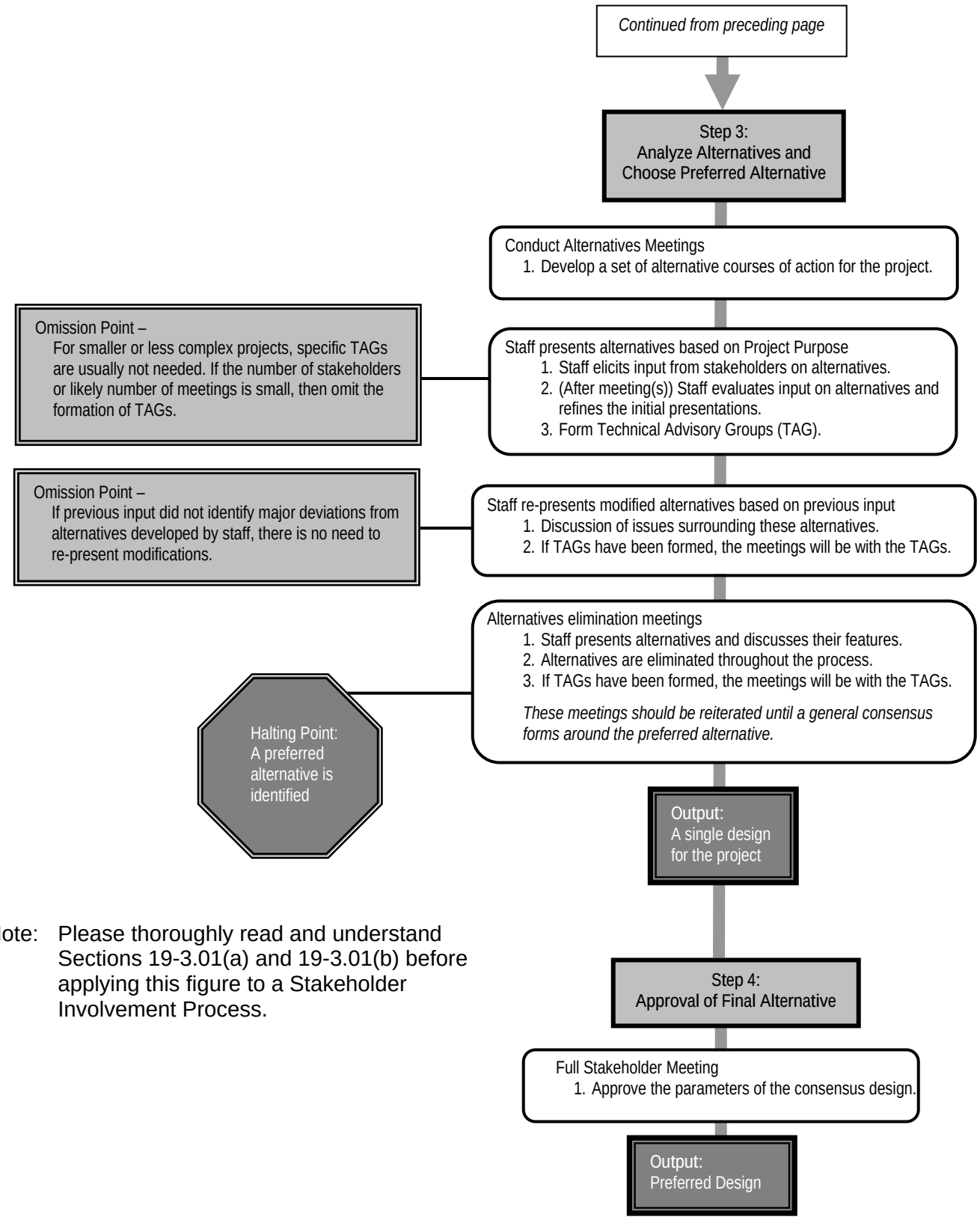
The general intent of the Illinois Department of Transportation is that all road design criteria in Parts IV and V typically should be met to provide a highway system that meets the transportation needs of the State and affords a reasonable level of safety, comfort, and convenience for the traveling public. Consistent with the flexibility that is inherent in the design criteria, exceptions can be accommodated when necessary to resolve other issues, (e.g., the need for innovative transportation solutions that respond to stakeholder concerns and values for the project area) or where it is determined that meeting the design criteria for particular project circumstances is not practical or not cost-effective. The Department has established a process to evaluate and approve exceptions to the design criteria, outlined in Section 31-8.04. This evaluation and approval process will reflect the fundamental principle that design exceptions must not compromise the Department's ability to ensure a reasonable level of safety or to effectively respond to the mobility needs of the project area.

Engineer of Design and Environment Michael L. Henie

Attachments



STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PROCESS
Figure 19-3B



Note: Please thoroughly read and understand Sections 19-3.01(a) and 19-3.01(b) before applying this figure to a Stakeholder Involvement Process.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PROCESS
Figure 19-3B

Geographic Interests

- o Adjacent property owners
  - ➢ Residential
  - ➢ Commercial
  - ➢ Industrial
  - ➢ Institutional: education, religious, government, non-profit
- o Adjacent property renters
  - ➢ Residential
  - ➢ Commercial
  - ➢ Industrial
  - ➢ Institutional
- o Transportation Service Providers
  - ➢ Public Transportation Agencies
  - ➢ Airports
  - ➢ Marine Ports
- o Neighborhood Organizations
  - ➢ Homeowners Associations
  - ➢ Local Interest Groups

Local and Regional Officials

- o Local jurisdiction elected and appointed officials
  - ➢ Mayors
  - ➢ Aldermen/City Council
  - ➢ County Board Members
  - ➢ County Commissioners
  - ➢ Township Boards
  - ➢ Planning Commissions
- o Local jurisdiction transportation or technical professionals
  - ➢ Public Safety Officials
  - ➢ Public Works Directors
  - ➢ Traffic Engineers
  - ➢ Planning Directors
- o Permitting Agencies
  - ➢ Corps of Engineers
  - ➢ US Environmental Protection Agency
  - ➢ Ill. Environmental Protection Agency
  - ➢ Coast Guard
  - ➢ US Fish and Wildlife Service
  - ➢ Ill. Department of Natural Resources

Transportation Professionals

- o Regional Transportation Professionals
  - ➢ Metropolitan Planning Organization transportation planners
  - ➢ Council of Government Planners
  - ➢ Transportation Management Associations
- o State Transportation Professionals
  - ➢ State DOT Highway designers
  - ➢ Traffic Engineers
  - ➢ Environmental Planners
- o Federal Transportation Professionals
  - ➢ Federal Highway Administration
  - ➢ Federal Transit Administration

Interest Groups

- o Facility users
  - ➢ Commuters
  - ➢ Truckers
  - ➢ Business Customers
  - ➢ Major Regional Employers
  - ➢ Tourists
- o Transportation Interest Groups
  - ➢ Transit
  - ➢ Bicycle
  - ➢ Pedestrian
  - ➢ Highway
- o Business Organizations
  - ➢ Local and Regional Chambers of Commerce
  - ➢ Economic Development Agencies
  - ➢ Industry Associations
- o Environmental Interest Groups
- o Historic Preservation and Scenic Conservation Groups
- o Growth Management Interest Groups
- o Traditionally underserved communities
  - ➢ Local advocates for low income facility users
  - ➢ Local racial and ethnic minority advocacy groups
  - ➢ Local advocacy groups for people with disabilities

STAKEHOLDER TYPES
Figure 19-3C

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN (SIP)
ILLINOIS ROUTE 999 STUDY
SILVER DOLLAR CITY ROAD TO GRINDERS SWITCH BLACKTOP

INTRODUCTION

The section of Illinois Route 999 through the Village of Hooterville has been studied and debated for many years. The existing route runs through downtown Hooterville, and serves as its Main Street. It carries 40,000 ADT with 30% trucks on two narrow 10 feet wide lanes. It is the location of a perennial high accident location segment on IL999 and has become a serious bottleneck for traffic between the burgeoning towns of Pixley and Crabwell Corners on either side of Hooterville. There are considerable impediments to widening IL999 through town, including an historic district, adjacent 4(f) properties, parking concerns and minimal building setbacks. There is also much opposition to a bypass of Hooterville, particularly from the business interests in town. There are also resource issues which greatly complicate any possible bypass route, including extensive high-quality wetlands, Indian mounds and other historic and archaeological resources and identified threatened and endangered species habitats. The preliminary scope, schedule and budget of the project assumes some sort of bypass of Hooterville, but this scope is open to revision based on input from stakeholders.

Given the potential for controversy, the likelihood for resource impacts and the nature of any probable improvement, Deputy Director / Region 9 Engineer Mike Agnew opted to designate this project to use the principles of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) for its development upon its inclusion into the Department's Proposed Highway Improvement Program in April of 2000.

CSS is a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a facility that fits into its surroundings and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources while maintaining safety and mobility. A Stakeholder Involvement Plan (SIP) is critical to the success of CSS principles on a project. The SIP, by its very nature, is a work in progress and thus subject to revision anytime events warrant.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Identify all stakeholders of the project, and ensure their opportunity for meaningful input into the project's development from beginning to end.
- Determine project context, with stakeholder input and concurrence.
- Identify transportation problems which can and should be solved by the project, with stakeholder input and concurrence.
- Identify reasonable alternative solutions to solve identified transportation problems, with stakeholder input and concurrence.
- Choose a preferred alternative solution to identified transportation problems for the project, with stakeholder input and concurrence.
- Treat all involved parties with respect and dignity, in a transparent manner and in a way that ensures their input was duly heard and considered.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN (SIP)
ILLINOIS ROUTE 999 STUDY
SILVER DOLLAR CITY ROAD TO GRINDERS SWITCH BLACKTOP

PROJECT STUDY GROUP (PSG)

A PSG was formed for this project upon its inclusion in the Multi-Year Program. The PSG is the multi-disciplinary team which will develop the project for the district. The disciplines within the PSG will depend on the context of the project. The membership of the PSG is not static, but can and will evolve as the understanding of the projects context does. From the initial scoping of the project and its apparent context components, the following persons were assigned to the PSG.

PROJECT STUDY GROUP			
NAME	POSITION	ADDRESS	PHONE
Bill Albright	IDOT Project Engineer	123 First Street Lone Waddie, IL 99999	888/555-0000
Steve Allen	IDOT Environmental Studies Supervisor	123 First Street Lone Waddie, IL 99999	888/555-0000
Tammy Allison	IDOT Landscape Architect	123 First Street Lone Waddie, IL 99999	888/555-0000
Allan Andrews	IDOT Bike &Ped Coordinator	123 First Street Lone Waddie, IL 99999	888/555-0000
Janette Blazier	IDOT Archaeologist	2300 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, Il 62764	217/785-0000
Kevin Brown	IDOT Biological Specialist	2300 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, Il 62764	217/785-0000
Tom Carroll	IDOT Historic Specialist	2300 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, Il 62764	217/785-0000
Dan Cheek	IDOT Wetland Specialist	2300 S. Dirksen Parkway Springfield, Il 62764	217/785-0000
Edwina Cole	IDOT Geometrics Engineer	123 First Street Lone Waddie, IL 99999	888/555-0000
Rene Echevaria	IDOT Construction Field Engineer	123 First Street Lone Waddie, IL 99999	888/555-0000
Rajiv Kumar	IDOT Maintenance Field Engineer	123 First Street Lone Waddie, IL 99999	888/555-0000
Bert Collazo	Consultant Project Manager	XYZ, LLC 123 Infinity Avenue Milagro, IL 88888	888/555-9999

EXAMPLE STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN
Figure 19-3D

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN (SIP)
ILLINOIS ROUTE 999 STUDY
SILVER DOLLAR CITY ROAD TO GRINDERS SWITCH BLACKTOP

PROJECT STUDY GROUP, CONTINUED

PROJECT STUDY GROUP			
NAME	POSITION	ADDRESS	PHONE
Brandon Parks	Consultant Environmental Lead	XYZ, LLC 123Infinity Avenue Milagro, IL 88888	888/555-9999
Doug Delaney	Consultant Engineering Lead	XYZ, LLC 123 Infinity Avenue Milagro, IL 88888	888/555-9999
Lisa Khosrow	IDOT Land Acq. Condemnation Engineer	123 First Street Lone Waddie, IL 99999	888/555-0000
Jeff Fleming	Illinois DNR Wildlife Specialist	1 Natural Resources Way Springfield, Il 62702	217/782-0000
Charles Graves	Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Specialist	123 Second Street Red Rock, IL 98989	999/555-0000
Lori Kirby	FHWA Transportation Engineer	3250 Executive Park Drive Springfield, Illinois 62703	217/555-9999

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN (SIP)
ILLINOIS ROUTE 999 STUDY
SILVER DOLLAR CITY ROAD TO GRINDERS SWITCH BLACKTOP

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

The Project Study Group (PSG) first examined the district's list of concerned citizens, public officials, organizations, agencies to begin to compile a preliminary list of project stakeholders. Next, the PSG contacted the following local elected officials and agency representatives:

NAME	AFFILIATION	ADDRESS	PHONE
Floyd Smoot	State Senator	16 Eminence Drive Pixley, IL 62994	888/555-1234
Homer Bedlow	State Representative	23 Longbranch Lane Crabwell Corners, IL 62995	888/555-2345
Oliver Wendell Douglas	Mayor of Hooterville	1 Municipal Boulevard Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-3456
Charlie Pratt	Hooter County Executive	32 Waterworks Drive Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-4567
Alf Monroe	Greater Hooterville Regional Planning Commission	34 Planning Way Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-5678

Between these sources and research of correspondence pertaining to the project from the past, the following list of stakeholders was developed by the PJS, in addition to the public officials named above:

STAKEHOLDERS			
NAME	AFFILIATION	ADDRESS	PHONE
Sam Drucker	Hooterville Chamber of Commerce	1 Main Street Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-6789
Eustis Haney	The Bottoms Neighborhood Association	123 Flood Plain Drive Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-7890
Alan Longmire	The Heights Historic District	333 Bluff Circle Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-8901
Lisa Douglas	Hooterville Center for Independent Living	222 Second Avenue Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-9012
Newt Kiley	Friends of the Slough	321 Star Route Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-0123

EXAMPLE STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN
Figure 19-3D

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN (SIP)
ILLINOIS ROUTE 999 STUDY
SILVER DOLLAR CITY ROAD TO GRINDERS SWITCH BLACKTOP

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION, CONTINUED

STAKEHOLDERS			
NAME	AFFILIATION	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ken Marsh	Hooter County Wheelpeople	Wright Brothers Circle Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-9876
Hank Kimball	Citizen	44 Main Street Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-8765
Joe Carson	Small Business Owner	981 Main Street Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-7654
Fred Ziffel	Hooterville Senior Citizens	333Main Street Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-6543
Kate Bradley	Hooter County Engineer	400 County Highway 1 Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-5432
Roy Settle	Spindletop Oil Company	804 Rockefeller Lane Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-4321
Andre Torbett	Hooterville Tourism Council	5 Main Street Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-3210
Michael Tursen	Hooterville Public Schools	456 Reading Road Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-2109
Judy Steele	Lick Skillet Township Supervisor	509 Boogie Blacktop Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-1098
Richard Black Dog	Mound Builders Tribal Repatriation Association	999 Rain-In-the-Face Road Bone Hill, IL 61999	618/555-0123
Derrick Tibbs	Protectors of the Embarras Longnose Sucker	Rural Route 1 Level Pebble, IL 62499	618/555-3210
Edwin Quinn	Illinois SHPO	1 Old State Capitol Springfield, IL 62701	217/785-9999
Dave Ruller	Muddy Branch Township Supervisor	666 Shaman Court Crabwell Corners, IL 62995	888/555-0987
Nancy Sanchez	La Raza of Hooter County	77 Zapata Lane Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-9898
Leigh Ann Tribble	Illinois Road Users	4300 Comanche Drive Springfield, IL 62711	217/555-2222

EXAMPLE STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN
Figure 19-3D

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN (SIP)
ILLINOIS ROUTE 999 STUDY
SILVER DOLLAR CITY ROAD TO GRINDERS SWITCH BLACKTOP

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFCATION, CONTINUED

STAKEHOLDERS			
NAME	AFFILIATION	ADDRESS	PHONE
Nathan Vaughn	US Fish & Wildlife Service	1499 Bradfordton Road Springfield, IL 62711	217/555-3333
Eb Dawson	Citizen	Rural Route 99 Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-8787
Arnold Ziffel	Artist	441 Main Street Hooterville, IL 62996	888/555-7878

Initial stakeholder identification was completed in June of 2000.

TENTATIVE GROUND RULES FOR THE STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

The PSG must establish ground rules under which the SIP will operate. These will be established tentatively with the initiation of the SIP, but must be agreed to by the stakeholders. As such, they are not immutable. Following are the tentative rules:

- The purpose of the SIP is to gather and duly consider input on the project from all stakeholders, in order to produce the best solutions to any problems identified by the process.
- All input from all participants in the process is valued and considered.
- The role of the stakeholders is to advise the PSG, which will make the ultimate decisions on this project. A consensus of stakeholder concurrence on project choices is sought, but the ultimate decisions remain in the hands of the PSG and the State of Illinois.
- All participants must come to the process with an open mind and participate openly and honestly.
- Consensus is defined as a majority of the stakeholders in agreement, with the minority agreeing that their input was duly considered.
- The PSG will make all final decisions, with the goal of seeking stakeholder consensus thereon.
- All participants in the process must treat each other with respect and dignity.
- The list of stakeholders is subject to revision at any time events warrant.
- Minutes of all stakeholder contacts will be maintained by the PSG, with the content subject to stakeholder concurrence.
- The project must progress at a reasonable pace, based on the original project schedule.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN (SIP)
ILLINOIS ROUTE 999 STUDY
SILVER DOLLAR CITY ROAD TO GRINDERS SWITCH BLACKTOP

TENTATIVE GROUND RULES FOR THE STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PROCESS, CONTINUED

- All decisions made by the State of Illinois must be arrived at in a clear and transparent manner and stakeholders should agree their input has been duly considered.
- Members of the media are welcome in all stakeholder meetings, but must remain in the role of observers, not participants in the process.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF INVOLVEMENTS

- The first meeting with all stakeholders will include gaining stakeholder consensus on the ground rules of the SIP including descriptions of roles, a description of the IDOT project development process and an introduction to the stakeholders of the preliminary project concept. Further, the project study group must explain the role the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will play in the development of the project. Finally, the PSG will conduct a context audit with the stakeholders to determine characteristics contributing to the project's context. The format for this meeting, like all stakeholder meetings for this SIP, will be in a workshop format to facilitate collaboration. It should precede definition of preliminary purpose & need, and its target date will tentatively be August 2000.
- The second stakeholder meeting will draw upon the completed context audit, and will have as its goal the development of a comprehensive statement of the transportation problem to be solved by the project. The statement must be realistic under the constraints placed by engineering considerations, available funding and geographic limitations. The statement must also represent a consensus view. This meeting should also precede definition of preliminary purpose & need, and its target date is January 2001
- The third meeting with all stakeholders is to define several possible alternatives for further consideration, and is complete once consensus is reached. It should take place after preliminary purpose & need and determination of reasonable alternatives. Its target date is June 2001.
- The fourth stakeholder meeting has the goal of attaining consensus on a preferred alternative for the project. It should be held after in-depth analysis of reasonable alternatives and before a recommended alignment is chosen. Its target date is January 2002.
- The fifth and final stakeholder meeting is intended to formally approve the final preferred alternative, and should precede official design approval. There should be a formal and comprehensive statement outlining the purpose of the project, its scope specific design elements of the final alternative. The target date for this meeting is June 2002.

EXAMPLE STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN
Figure 19-3D

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN (SIP)
ILLINOIS ROUTE 999 STUDY
SILVER DOLLAR CITY ROAD TO GRINDERS SWITCH BLACKTOP

OTHER METHODS OF CONTACT

The PSG will also use the following methods to keep stakeholders regularly informed about the project:

- A newsletter will be published and mailed quarterly to all identified stakeholders and any others expressing the desire to receive it. It will contain the most up-to-date information regarding the project.

- A website (www.dot.il.gov/hoot) will be established to disseminate information on the project on the internet. It will include text, photos and illustrations. It will also allow opportunities for immediate feedback from both the stakeholders and the general public. It will be updated as new information becomes available.

- A toll free number (800/555-HOOT) will be established for those without access to a computer, or without access to the internet, or who simply prefer to use the telephone. The number will contain summaries of project activities and decisions, to be updated as activities indicate. There will also be voicemail capability to garner feedback and collect questions for later disposition.

CHANGES TO STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

This SIP is only tentative. All parts, including the stakeholder list, are fluid. It is subject to change any time events or individuals warrant.

Illinois Department of Transportation

Community Context Audit Form

Purpose:

The Community Context Audit form is intended to be a guide to identify various community characteristics that make each transportation project location unique to its residents, its businesses and the public in general. This information will help to define the purpose and need of the proposed transportation improvements based upon community goals and local plans for future development. The audit is designed to take into account the community's history or heritage, present conditions and anticipated conditions. As you complete this audit, please consider the interaction of persons and groups within your community when considering factors such as mobility and access (vehicular, non-vehicular and transit modes), safety, local and regional economics, aesthetics and overall quality of life.

PROJECT INFORMATION		
Key Route:	PPS No.:	
F.A. Route:	Marked Route:	County:
Section:	Project Length:	
Job Number:	Contract No.:	Program No.:
Limits:		
Municipalities:		
General Description of Existing Facility:		
Need for Proposed Improvement:		
Design Policies Used: ☐ New Construction ☐ Reconstruction ☐ 3R ☐ Other		
General Description of Proposed Improvement:		
Estimated Program Cost: (in FY Dollars) Fund Type:		
Construction Cost:	ROW Cost:	
Utility Relocation Cost:	Consultant P.E. Cost:	

Contact Person: _____

Telephone #: _____

Individual Completing Context Audit Form: _____

Date: _____

COMMUNITY CONTEXT AUDIT FORM
Figure 19-3E

Illinois Department of Transportation

Community Context Audit Form

Section 1: Community Characteristics/ Land Use

Please conduct a visual assessment in the field and attach a project location map. If appropriate, include a photo index for the project area. If appropriate gather public opinions and concerns about the proposed project. Consider community needs as the basis for this assessment. Assess the community characteristics and indicate the community's perception of importance for each characteristic currently and based upon known / planned future conditions.

Community Characteristics	Presence		Importance		
	Yes	No	High	Med.	Low
Is this place an established city center?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is this place a multi-modal transportation center?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is this place a commercial center?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is this place a residential center?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is this place a mixed residential /commercial center?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is this place an industrial center?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is this place a rural/agricultural area? Comments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are there important cultural features or identifiers which convey information about the community within the project area? If yes, list:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are there social/community features or identifiers within the project area? If yes, list:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are there important architectural features within the project area? If yes, list:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are there important natural features within the project area? If yes, list:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is this place of historical significance to the community? If yes, list:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Overall assessment of community characteristics and setting:

☐ **Urban ..** ☐ **Suburban ..** ☐ **Rural**

(Please note, this is not the identification of a functional classification. This is an assessment of the community based upon physical characteristics noted above.)

COMMUNITY CONTEXT AUDIT FORM
Figure 19-3E

Illinois Department of Transportation

Community Context Audit Form

Section 2: Infrastructure Assessment

Assess the project or study area for the presence and adequacy of the following infrastructure items. If present (a yes response) and in poor condition, please make notation and provide any other relevant comments in space provided for each item. If not present (a no response), indicate in the comment section if the item needs further evaluation. Indicate the level of importance each item may have to the community currently and based upon known / planned future conditions.

Infrastructure	Presence		Importance		
	Yes	No	High	Med.	Low
Sidewalks Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ADA Compliance Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Bicycle Lanes/Paths/Facilities Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
On-street Parking Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transit Connections Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Transit Shelters Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Street Lighting Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pedestrian Lighting Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Pedestrian Crossings Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Signals (Traffic. Directional & Pedestrian) Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Crosswalks Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other Comments:

_____

_____

_____

COMMUNITY CONTEXT AUDIT FORM
Figure 19-3E

Illinois Department of Transportation

Community Context Audit Form

Section 3: Neighborhood Culture, Aesthetics and Street Amenities

Assess the study area for the following amenities and cultural, aesthetic and comfort factors. If present (a yes response) and items are in poor condition, please make notation and provide any other relevant comments in the space provided for each item. If not present (a no response), indicate in the comment section if the item requires further evaluation. Indicate the level of importance each item may have to the neighborhood currently and based upon known / planned future conditions.

Resource	Presence		Importance		
	Yes	No	High	Med.	Low
Neighborhood Parks /Open Space /Civic Areas Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Benches Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trash Containers Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Street Trees Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Landscaping Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wayfinding Signage Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community Safety Issues Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traffic Safety Comments:	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please list any seasonal events affected by proposed improvements at this location.

_____

_____

_____

Overall Comments:

_____

_____

_____

COMMUNITY CONTEXT AUDIT FORM
Figure 19-3E

Illinois Department of Transportation

Community Context Audit Form

Section 4: Economic Development

Assess the project or study area for the following community development indicators. Indicate the level of
importance for each indicator currently and based upon known / planned future conditions.

Resource	Presence		Importance		
	Yes	No	High	Med.	Low
Has this area been identified for new development? If yes, describe the proposed or planned development.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Are visitors attracted to this area? If yes, indicate why?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is the local economy supported by historic, natural, cultural and entertainment resources?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does the roadway serve as a commuter corridor?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does the roadway serve as a gateway?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do stakeholders include business or other advocacy groups? (in addition to public agencies and residential associations)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is limiting sprawl a regional concern applicable to this place?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Is redevelopment underway or planned for this place? If yes, how does the proposed transportation project impact redevelopment?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other Comments:

_____

_____

_____

COMMUNITY CONTEXT AUDIT FORM
Figure 19-3E

Illinois Department of Transportation

Community Context Audit Form

Section 5: Community Planning

Assess the proposed project in context to local planning initiatives. Please provide the following information and documentation related to the project or study area.

	Yes	No
Does the municipality, county or regional planning authority have a comprehensive plan? If yes, indicate the date of the plan.	☐	☐
Is this project generally consistent with the municipality's comprehensive plan? If yes, indicate how.	☐	☐
Are there any special studies associated with this project? If yes, please indicate the name of study or studies and attach copies.	☐	☐
Has the municipality adopted a growth management plan or designated growth area? If yes, is this project located within the designated growth area.	☐	☐
Does this project have regional significance? If so, explain.	☐	☐
Are there other scheduled or planned projects that may tie into this project or impact this project? If yes, please indicate the project name(s) and type of project(s).	☐	☐
Identify planning and project development partners for this project:	☐	☐
	☐	☐

Other Comments:

_____

_____

_____